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piece, held in the hands of a single determined man, was capable of doing, for land service, a certain portion of the destructive or defensive duty that could be achieved by a regiment or a battalion; but a single stick of timber, growing in the woods and valuable as part of the material from which a great war vessel might be moulded, was as yet nothing for the smallest service, and could be nothing until time, labor and expense should be devoted to joining it with other pieces and completing the necessary combination. And so, in a less degree, of the iron that lay thickly imbedded in the American hills, needing to be dug out, smelted and moulded, with machinery to them almost unattainable, before assuming any such shape as could either benefit themselves or do injury to their enemies.

Obviously, in spite of the fact that the colonists owned a coast population only less extensive than the shores they occupied, the early prospect for any profitable resistance to Great Britain on the water was very discouraging indeed. Yet those know little of the mettle of the men of 1776 who doubt that among the first and most determined in the daring of resistance to the encroachments and the subsequent severities of the mother country, were those who heard the thunder of the Atlantic surf every day in their ears, and who every day inhaled the invigorating airs coming up from the Atlantic waves. After-events fully proved this truth; and no brighter stars burn in the galaxy of Revolutionary heroes than the names of those who early bore the flag in more than an average proportion of victories, however moderate their scope and sometimes insignificant their apparent effects. So often have been recalled to the mind, through all the past century, the names of the leaders in this early sea service, with John Paul Jones always leading the van in a sort of meteor-like glory rendered a trifle lurid by his own rash daring and the malice of his enemies, that in the present instance they may well be omitted from a record having nothing to do with the great personages or great events of the service, though illustrating what may have been of quite as much eventual consequence to the patriot cause—the *first naval conflict* and the *first naval victory*.

This conflict, the "Lexington of the Sea," comes by that title alike honorably and appropriately, the happy designation having been bestowed upon it, nearly half a century ago, by James Fenimore Cooper, to whom the naval service of the country was at first indebted for active personal devotion, but who afterward both honored and served it more effectively by using his able pen in its interests. Meanwhile, no condensation from the record of the event given by that powerful writer in his "Naval History," could so well convey the exact facts, illustrated by Mr. J. O. Davidson, as the words of the reliable historian and skilled naval officer; and we accordingly extract the account, with the single additional statement that the moment chosen by the artist is that when the schooner's helm being shot away, she broached-to and was boarded by Captain O'Brien and his determined crew of farmers and countrymen. It may well be supposed that the conflict, carried on with axes, pitchforks, and such other ready-to-hand weapons as could most easily be grasped at short notice for a desperate enterprise which would not wait for preparation, must have been close and desperate; and as such the artist has certainly represented it with full propriety. Following is the graphic and careful description by Cooper, of this first naval conflict of the American Revolution:

"The first nautical enterprise that succeeded the battle of Lexington was one purely of private adventure. The intelligence of this conflict was brought to Machias in Maine, on Saturday, the 9th of May, 1775. An armed schooner in the service of the crown, called the *Margaretta*, was lying in port, with two sloops under her convoy, that were loading with lumber on behalf of the king's government.

"The bearers of the news were enjoined to be silent, a plan to capture the *Margaretta* having been immediately projected among some of the more spirited of the inhabitants. The next day, being Sunday, it was hoped that the officers of the schooner might be seized while in church, but the scheme failed in consequence of the precipitation of some engaged. Captain Moore, who commanded the *Margaretta*, saw the assailants, and, with his officers, escaped through the windows of the church to the shore, where they were protected by the guns of the vessel. The

alarm was now taken, springs were got on the *Margaretta's* cables, and a few harmless shot were fired over the town by way of intimidation. After a little delay, however, the schooner dropped down below the town to a distance exceeding a league. Here she was followed, summoned to surrender, and fired on from a high bank, which her own shot could not reach. The *Margaretta* again weighed, and running into the bay at the confluence of the two rivers, anchored.

"The following morning, which was Monday, the 11th of May, four young men took possession of one of the lumber sloops, and bringing her alongside of a wharf, they gave three cheers as a signal for volunteers. On explaining that their intentions were to make an attack on the *Margaretta*, a party of about thirty-five athletic men was soon collected. Arming themselves with fire-arms, pitchforks and axes, and throwing a small stock of provisions into the sloop, these spirited free-men made sail on their craft with a light breeze at northwest. When the *Margaretta* observed the approach of the sloop, she weighed and crowded sail to avoid a conflict that was every way undesirable, her commander not yet being apprised of all the facts that had occurred near Boston. In jibing, the schooner carried away her main-boom; but continuing to stand on, she ran into Holmes's Bay, and took a spar out of a vessel that was lying there. While these repairs were making, the sloop hove in sight again, and the *Margaretta* stood out to sea, in the hope of avoiding her. The breeze freshened, and with the wind on the quarter, the sloop proved to be the better sailer. So anxious was the *Margaretta* to avoid a collision, that Captain Moore now cut away his boats; but finding this ineffectual, and that his assailants were fast closing with him, he opened a fire, the schooner having an armament of four light guns and fourteen swivels. A man was killed on board the sloop, which immediately returned the fire with a small piece. This discharge killed the man at the *Margaretta's* helm, and cleared her quarter-deck. The schooner broached to, when the sloop gave a general discharge. Almost at the same instant the two vessels came foul of each other. A short conflict now took place with musketry, Captain Moore throwing hand grenades, with considerable effect, in person. This officer was immediately afterward shot down, however, when the people of the sloop boarded and took possession of their prize.

"The loss of life in this affair was not very great, though twenty men, on both sides, are said to have been killed and wounded. The force of the *Margaretta*, even in men, was much the most considerable, though the crew of no regular cruiser can ever equal in spirit and energy a body of volunteers assembled on an occasion like this. There was originally no commander in the sloop; but, previously to engaging the schooner, Jeremiah O'Brien was selected for that station. This affair was the Lexington of the sea; for like that celebrated land conflict, it was a rising of the people against a regular force, was characterized by a long chase, a bloody struggle and a triumph. It was also the first blow struck on the water, after the war of the American Revolution had actually commenced.

"The armament of the *Margaretta* was transferred to a sloop, and Mr. O'Brien made an attack on two small English cruisers that were said to have been sent out from Halifax expressly to capture him. By separating these vessels he took them both with little resistance, and the prisoners were all carried to Watertown, where the Provincial Legislature of Massachusetts was then assembled. The gallantry and good conduct of Mr. O'Brien were so generally admired, that he was immediately appointed a captain in the marine of the colony, and sent on the coast with his two last prizes, with orders to intercept vessels bringing supplies to the royal forces."

THE GREEN-CORN FESTIVAL OF THE CREEKS—1835.

WHEN the green corn ripens, the Creeks seem to begin their year. Until after certain religious rites, it is considered an infamy to touch the corn. The season approaching, there is a meeting of the chiefs of all the towns forming any particular clan. First, an order is given out for the manufacture of certain articles of pottery for a part of their festival. A second meeting gives out a second order. New matting is to be prepared for the seats of the assembly. There is a third meeting. A vast number of sticks are broken into as many parts as there are days intervening previous to the one appointed for the gathering of the clan. Runners are sent with these, made into bundles for each clansman. One is flung aside each day, and every one is punctually on the last day at the appointed rendezvous. I must now mention the place where they assemble.

It is a large square, with four large, long houses, one forming each side of the square, and at each angle a broad entrance to the area. These houses are of clay and a sort of wicker-work, with sharp-topped, sloping roofs, like those of our log houses, but more thoroughly finished. A space is left open all around at the back and sides of each house, to afford a free circulation of air; this opening came

about up to my chin, and enables one to peep in on all sides. The part of the house fronting the square is entirely open. It consists of one broad raised platform, a little more than knee-high, and curved and inclined so as to make a most comfortable place for either sitting or reclining. Over this is wrought the cane matting, which extends from the back to the ground in front. At each angle of the square, there is a broad entrance. Back of one angle, is a high, cone-roofed building, circular and dark, with a sloping entrance through a low door. It was so dark that I could not make out the interior, but some one said it was a council-house. It occupied one corner of an outer square next to the one I have described; two sides of which outer square were formed by thick and tall corn-fields, and a third by a raised embankment, apparently for spectators, and a fourth by the back of one of the buildings before described. In the centre was a high circular mound. This, it seems, was formed from the earth accumulated yearly by removing the surface of the sacred square, to this centre of the outer one. At every green-corn festival the sacred square is strewn with soil yet untrodden; the soil of the year preceding being taken away, but preserved as I explain. No stranger's foot is allowed to press the new earth of the sacred square until its consecration is complete. A gentleman told me that he and a friend had chanced once to walk through, along the edge, just after the new soil was laid. A friendly chief saw him and remonstrated, and seemed greatly incensed. He explained that it was done in ignorance. The chief was pacified, but ordered every trace of the unhallowed step to be upturned, and a fresh covering in the place.

The sacred square being ready, every fire in the towns dependent on the chief of the clan, is at the same moment extinguished. Every house must at that moment have been newly swept and washed. Enmities are forgotten. If a person under a sentence for a crime can steal in unobserved and appear among the worshipers, his crime is no more remembered. The first ceremony is to light the new fire of the year. A square board is brought, with a small circular hollow in the centre. It receives the dust of a forest tree or of dry leaves. Five chiefs take turns to whirl the stick, until the friction produces a flame. From this sticks are lighted and conveyed to every house of the clan. The original flame is taken to the centre of the sacred square. Wood is heaped there and a strong fire lighted. Over this fire, the holy urns of new-made pottery are placed; drinking gourds, with long handles, are set around on a bench, officers are over the whole in attendance, and here, what they call the black drink is brewed with many forms and with intense solemnity.

I can not describe to you my feelings as I first found myself in the Indian country. We rode miles after miles in the native forest, neither habitation nor inhabitant to disturb the solitude and majesty of the wilderness. At length we met a native in his native land. He was galloping on horseback. His air was Oriental; he had a turban, a robe of fringed and gaudily figured calico, scarlet leggings, and beaded belts and garters and pouch. We asked how far it was to the square. He held up a finger, and we understood him to mean one mile. Next, we met two Indian women on horseback, loaded with water-melons. We bought some. In answer to our question of the road, they half covered a finger, to say it was half a mile further, and smiling, added "*sneezermuch*"—meaning that we should find lots of our brethren the sneezers to keep us company. We passed groups of Indian horses tied in the shade, with cords long enough to let them graze freely; we then saw the American flag (a gift from the government) floating over one of the hut-tops in the square. We next passed groups of Indian horses and carriages, and servants, and under the heels of one horse a drunken vagabond Indian, asleep, or half asleep; and at last we got to the corner of the square, where they were in the midst of their devotions. I stood upon a mound at the corner angle to look in. I was told that this mound was composed of ashes from such fires as were now blazing in the centre, during many

preceding years; and that these ashes are never permitted to be scattered, but must thus be gathered up, and carefully and religiously preserved.

Before the solemnities begin, and I believe ere the new earth is placed, the women dance in the sacred square. The preliminary dance of theirs is by themselves; I missed this. They then separate from the men, and remain apart from them until after the fasting and other religious forms are gone through.

On my arrival, the sacred square, as I gazed from the corner mound, presented a most striking sight. Upon each of the notched posts of which I have already spoken as attached to the houses of the sacred square, was a stack of tall cones, hung all over with feathers, black and white. There were rude paint daubs about the posts and roof-beams of the houses fronting on the square, and here and there they were festooned with ground-vines. Chiefs were standing around the sides and corners alone and opposite each other, their eyes riveted on the earth, and motionless as statues. Every building within was filled with crowds of silent Indians, those on the back rows seated in the Turkish fashion, but those in front with their feet to the ground. All were turbaned, all fantastically painted; all in dresses varying in ornament, but alike in wildness. One chief wore a tall black hat, with a broad massy silver band around it, and a peacock's feather; another had a silver skull-cap, with a deep silver bullion fringe down to his eyebrows, and plates of silver from his knee, descending his tunic. Most of them had the eagle plume, which only those may wear who have slain a foe; a number wore military plumes in various positions about their turbans; and one had a tremendous tuft of black feathers declining from the back of his head over his back; while another's head was all shaven smooth, excepting a tuft across the centre from the back to the front, like a crest of a helmet.

The first sound I heard was a strange low deep wail—a sound of many voices drawn out in perfect unison, and only dying away with the breath itself, which, indeed, was longer sustained than could be done by any singer whom I ever yet heard. This was followed by a second wail in the same style, but shrill like the sound of musical glasses, and giving the same shiver to the nerves. And after a third wail, in another key, the statue-like figures moved and formed into two diagonal lines opposite to each other, their backs to opposite angles of the square. One by one they then approached the huge bowls in which the black drink was boiling, and in rotation dipped a gourd and took, with a most reverential expression, a long, deep draught each. The next part of the ceremony with each was somewhat curious; but the rapt expressions of the worshipers, and the utter absence of anything to give a disagreeable air to the act, took away the effect it may produce even in description. By some knack, without moving a muscle of the face, or joint, they moved about like strange spectres more than human beings. But soon the character of the entertainment changed, and I more particularly observed two circular plates of brass and steel, which appeared to be the remains of very antique shields. They were borne with great reverence by two chiefs. The nation do not pretend to explain whence they came; they keep them apart as something sacred; they are only produced on great occasions. I was told, too, that ears of green corn were brought in at a part of the ceremony to-day, which I did not see, and presented to a chief. He took them, handing them back with an invocation that corn might continue plenty through the year among them. This seemed to be the termination of the peace-offerings, and the religious part of the affair was now to wind up with emblems of war. These were expressed in what they call a *gun dance*. When dispositions were making for it, some persons in carriages were desired by a white *linkister* to draw back and to remove their horses to a distance. Some ladies especially were warned. "Keep out of their way, ma'm," said the *linkister* to a lady, "for when they come racing about here with their guns they gits powerful sarcey." I saw them dressing for the ceremony, if it may be called dressing to throw off

nearly every part of a scanty covering. But the Indians are especially devoted to dress, in their way. Some of them went aside to vary their costume with nearly every dance.

Now appeared a procession of some forty or fifty women. They entered the square and took their seats together in one of the open houses. Two men sat in front of them, with gourds filled with pebbles. The gourds were shaken so as to keep time; and the women began a long chant, with which, at regular intervals, was given a sharp, short whoop from male voices. The women's song was said to be intended for the wail of mothers, wives and daughters at the departure of the warriors for the fight; the response conveyed the resolution of the warriors not to be withheld, but to fight and conquer. And now appeared two hideous-looking old warriors, with tomahawks and scalping-knives, painted most ferociously. Each went half round the circle, exchanged exclamations, kept up a sort of growl all the while, and at length stopped with a war-whoop. We were now told to hurry to the outer square. The females and their male leaders, left their places inside, and went to the mound in the centre of the outer square.

This mound their forms entirely covered, and the effect was very imposing. Here they resumed their chaunt. The spectators mounted on the embankment. I got on a pile of wood—holy wood, I believe—and heaped there to keep up the sacred fires. There were numbers of Indian women in the crowd. Four stuffed figures were placed erect in the four corners of the square.

We now heard firing and whooping on all sides. At length, in the high corn on one side, we saw crouching savages, some with guns of every sort, some, especially the boys, with corn-stalks to represent guns. A naked chief with a long sabre, the blade painted blood-color, came before them flourishing his weapon and haranguing vehemently. In another corn-field appeared another party. The two savages already mentioned as having given the war dance in the sacred square, now hove in sight, on a third side, cowering. One of these, I understood, was the person who had shot the chief I mentioned in the first part of this letter—the chief who made an objectionable treaty and whose house was burned. Both these warriors crept slowly toward the outer square; one darted upon one of the puppets, caught him from behind and stole him off. Another grasped another puppet by the waist, flung him in the air, as he fell tumbled on him, ripped him with his knife, tore off the scalp and broke away in triumph. A third puppet was tomahawked and a fourth shot. These were the emblems of the various forms of warfare. After the first shot, the two parties whooped and began to fire indiscriminately, and every shot was answered by a whoop.

One shot his arrow into the square, but falling short of the enemy, he covered himself with corn and crept thither to regain it, and bore it back in safety, honored with a triumphant yell as he returned. After much of this brush skirmishing, both parties burst into the square. There was constant firing and war-whooping, the music of chanting and of the pebbled gourds going all the time. At length the fighters joined in procession, dancing a triumphal dance around the mound, plunging thence headlong into the sacred square and all around it, and then scampering around the outside, and pouring back to the battle square, and the closing whoop being given, all then, from the battle square, rushed, helter-skelter, yelping, some firing as they went, and others pelting the spectators from their high places with the corn-stalks which had served for guns, and which gave blows so powerful that those who laughed at their impotence before, rubbed their shoulders and walked away ashamed.

We resumed our conveyances homeward, and, as we departed, heard the splashing and shouting of the warriors in the water.

Leave was now given to taste the corn, and all ate their fill, and, I suppose, did not much refrain from drinking, for I heard that every pathway and field around was strewed in the morning with sleeping Indians. — *John Howard Payne, in Harrison's "Life."*

GONE HOME ON CHRISTMAS MORNING.*

'Tis a practice tender, in many lands,
The dull waste of the years adorning—
That the children all listen to love's commands,
And go home on Christmas morning—

From the labor that may be so far away,
From the roof-tree that may be nearer—
The wide-scattered flock, on that holy day,
Find the one home older and dearer—

To greet the old father, with gray-bowed head,
And the mother with eyesight failing;
To learn what of joy the past season has shed,
Or what may be wanting or ailing—

To see if the parents remember, as well
As the children they sired and tended,
The glad summons that rings in the Christmas bell
For waiting and absence ended.

Ah, beautiful custom! to which nevermore
May the Christian world be a stranger,
While He is remembered, our sins who bore
From his Christmas birth in the manger!

And yet I am sad—oh, so sorry and sad—
Because on this Christmas morning,
One so dear—ah, the dearest and best that I had—
Has gone home with so little warning—

To her Father's house, with the portals of pearl;
To his table, where none can hunger;
To the River of Life, whose soft eddy and swirl
Make the bather aye fairer and younger;

To the welcoming hand and the warm embrace;
To the gifts that ne'er perish with using;
To the well-pleased smiles on the Father's face,
We are oft so fearful of losing:

To all that is sweetest, and dearest, and best—
And richest, beyond our dreaming;
And that bliss which is born in the Isles of the Blest,
And has neither fading nor seeming.

And yet I am weeping: my selfish loss
For the moment is blighting and blinding,
So that even the promise of Crown and Cross
Seems beyond my poor weak finding!

Make me wise, oh Father!—to bear this pain,
For her sake so beatified yonder!
To embrace all thy mercies with heart and brain,
In a faith that is humbler and fonder!—

'Till I learn what a blessing came to us all—
Half-miscalled in our doubting and scorning—
When my baby obeyed the All-Father's call,
And went home on Christmas morning.

— *New York Sunday Times.*

ART IN LONDON.

THE WINTER EXHIBITIONS.

THERE are no less than nine exhibitions of paintings now open to the London public, and the total number of pictures exceeds twenty-six hundred. It will be impossible, therefore, to do more than notice the more prominent ones. Most of the academicians are working for the spring exhibition, and are content to limit their winter show to a few small cabinet paintings and sketches.

Millais, the brilliant, is getting out three large works, which I have not yet had an opportunity of seeing. One is a rendering of Strath Tay, as seen from a point near Birnam: a combination of mountain, valley and river; gleams of light traversing the mist; a level of marshy hillside for foreground. He has been at work on this all the autumn, and has nearly finished it. Another is a life-size portrait, full length, of the Duchess of Westminster. The third portrays three children seated on the ground. Millais paints portraits with extraordinary vividness and solidity; but he does not divine character, nor inspire a soul. A good mirror produces as meritorious a counterfeit as does he. Surely a man possessed of such genius and executive power as his, might be in a better business, æsthetically speaking, than that of making

* SUTTON.—Died, in Brooklyn, N. Y., on Christmas morning, ANNIE JOSEPHINE, youngest child of James and Grace Sutton, aged 3 years and 16 days.